The Plantlife of Ratho

Bistorts, Sorrels, Docks etc • 2022-12-24

Redshank, Bistorts, Persicaria, Water-Pepper

Redshank – Widespread. Frequently white or pale (shown later).

Tends to have a black patch on the leaves which may be faint. Sprawling or upright.

Persicaria maculosa = Polygonum persicaria

Amphibous Bistort (land form) – Common alongside the canal path.

On land the leaf bases are rounded, in water the leaves are a slightly different shape (see next).

Persicaria amphibia = Polygonum amphibium

Amphibous Bistort (water form) – Ponds such as Kierhill Pond here beside the paintball woods, although more accessibly viewable at north-eastern arm of Threipmuir reservoir.

As the land form but the leaves float horizontally on the water and are slightly different shaped (with a cut or ingressed base rather than rounded).

Persicaria amphibia = Polygonum amphibium

Common Bistort – Occasional: Old gasworks (now developed), Kirkliston rail path, Clifton riverside, canalside W of Linlithgow has a fine patch.

Base of leaf trails down its stalk.

Bistorta officinalis = Persicaria bistorta

Himalayan Bistort – Riccarton, near the pools. Generally an escape or relic.

Persicaria affinis

Water-Pepper – Has been spotted near Ingliston, more visible a little outside at Harlaw.

Flowers are pale and gappy.

Persicaria hydropiper

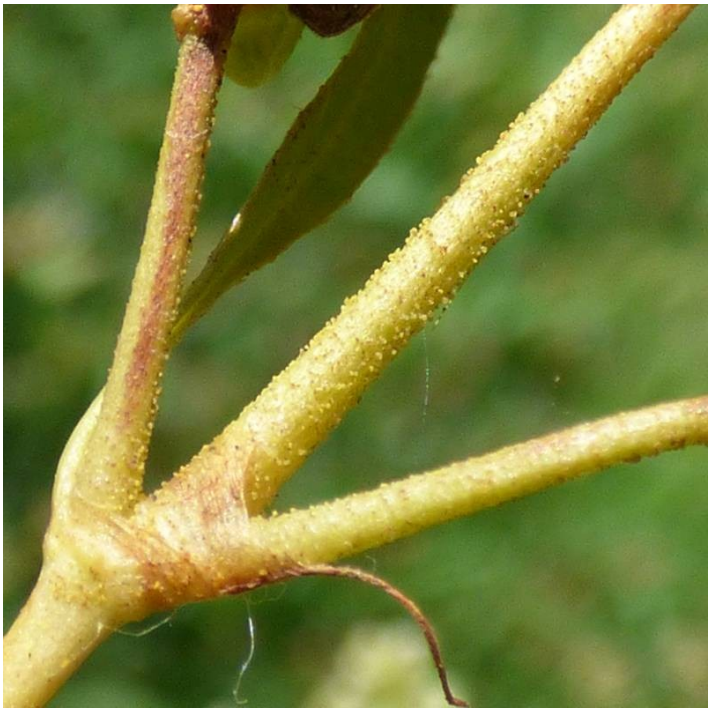
Redshank (pale form) – Frequent.

As Redshank earlier except whitish flowers - with blotches on the leaves that may be faint. Sprawling or upright.

Persicaria maculosa = Polygonum persicaria

Pale Persicaria – Infrequent, one particularly fine area of it in a fieldside at Hatton.

A bit like pale form of Redshank however its flower stems are very warty (right) It's also taller, has differently-shaped seeds and an unfrilly 'ochre', the tunic from which stems emerge.



Persicaria lapathifolia

Knotgrasses & Vines

Common Knotgrass – Widespread.

Secondary leaves are smaller than main ones, tends to scramble upwards.

Polygonum aviculare

Equal-Leaved Knotgrass – Here and there.

All leaves equal-sized, generally forming a mat.

Latin

Black Bindweed – Fields after crops finished, quarries, other disturbed ground.

Like a miniature Russian Vine. Could be mistaken for a Bindweed, but the flowers are quite different though often discreet and may need looking for.

Fallopia convolvulus

Russian Vine – Often seen overhanging people's gardens however in various places in Edinburgh runs rampant such as at the far canalside passing over the Water of Leith.

Fallopia baldschuanica = Polygonum baldschuanicum (& F. aubertii)

Buckwheat, Knotweed & Rhubarb

Buckwheat – Crop Fieldsides, here from the field edge beside Gogarmuir Bridge.

Fagopyrum esculentum

Japanese Knotweed – Often met, generally eliminated. The plants in Britain are almost all female and reproduce vegetatively from bits broken off.

Reynoutria japonica; Fallopia japonica

Rhubarb – Occasionally escaping, both of these were beside the canal outside people's fences a little outlying in either direction.

Rheum x rhabarbarum

DOCKS & SORRELS follow...

Sorrels

Sheep Sorrel – Frequent, tending to form low tight patches.

The leaves (right) are small and have 'ears' at their bases that veer away from the stem.

Rumex acetosella

Common Sorrel – Very frequent along the canalside and frequent in other natural places.

Much taller and larger than Sheep Sorrel, the leaves (right) have 'ears' at their bases pointing toward, past and around the stems.

Rumex acetosa subsp. acetosa

Docks

Broad-Leaved Dock – Common.

The lowest leaves are broad with an ingressed base. Fruits are toothy.

Rumex obtusifolius

Hybrid Dock (Curled x Broad-Leaved) – Occasional, where the two parents grow.

Like a Broad-Leaf Dock (above) but the lower leaves rather curly like Curled Dock (below), the leaves may appear narrower. This from Pumpherston.

Rumex x pratensis Mert. & Koch

Wood Dock – Common along canalside, damp wood edges, railpath from Newbridge to Dalmeny.

Leaves are like narrow triangles, lowest not ingressed at the base, flower spray not interspersed with leaves, fruits 1 sizeable wart.

Rumex sanguineus

Hybrid Dock (Broad-Leaved x Wood) – Very occasionally can be met as both parents are present.

This photo from a FB friend as I need to take a photo.
Lower leaves with an indented base like Broad-Leaved Dock, but upperside narrow and pointy like Wood Dock

(Photo to follow!)

Rumex x dufftii Hausskn.

Curled Dock (inland form) – Common.

Leaves narrow and crispy-edged, the spray of fruits very dense. Fruits have 1 wart.

Rumex crispus ssp crispus

Curled Dock (coastal form) – Dalmeny coastline; for comparison.

Much as the inland form however the fruit have 3 warts (right).

Rumex crispus ssp littoralis

Northern Dock – Kirkliston to behind Airport, Broxburn.

Tight dense head of large penny-like fruits which lack notable warts. Leaves slightly broad and curly-edged.

Latin

Clustered Dock – Dundas Loch (Kirkliston).

Rather scattered zigzaggy plant with small leaves, it resembles a dainty Wood Dock but the flower/fruit spray is interspersed with leaves and the fruit have 3 warts.

Rumex conglomeratus

Water Dock – Canalside - several toward Hermiston, quite a few heading toward Broxburn.

Long pointed leaves, and the plant can grow quite large. Fruits have 3 large warts.

Rumex hydrolapathum

DOCK FRUITS follow...

Dock Fruit

The fruits of docks are a good way to tell them apart...

Broad-Leaved Dock - Toothy, usually 1 wart.

Wood Dock - 1 large wart & 1-2 smaller ones.

Clustered Dock - 3 large warts.

Curled Dock (inland subspecies) - 1 large wart.

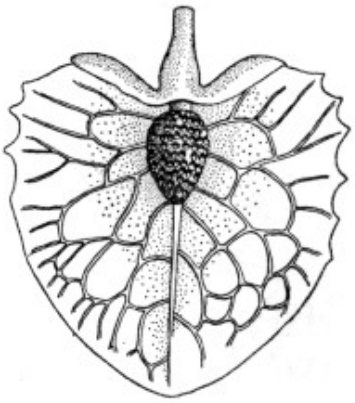
Curled Dock (shore subspecies) - 3 large warts.

Water Dock - 3 large warts.

Northern Dock - 0 warts (appear vestigial).

Rumex x pratensis (Broad x Curled)

FRUITS intermediate with a few rather short teeth -



Rumex x dufftii (Broad x Wood)

Fruits long like Wood, with some base teeth and elongated warts like Broad.